

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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P 112202Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9420

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 7134

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OAS, VE

SUBJECT: SAN JOSE CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 158657

1. I MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ESCOVAR SALOM JULY 11 AND REVIEWED FOR HIM THE MATERIAL IN THE REFTEL. WE SPENT A GOOD DEAL OF TIME GOING OVER THE HISTORICAL AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE CUBA QUESTION IN THE OAS ON WHICH ESCOVAR IS AS YET LARGELY AND BLISSFULLY UNINFORMED.

2. HE UNDERSTANDABLY DID WANT TO KNOW WHETHER WE WOULD VOTE TO LIFT THE SANCTIONS. I SAID I COULD GIVE HIM NO ASSURANCES ON THAT SCORE; FLAT CLEARLY MUCH WOULD DEPEND ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN SAN JOSE. BUT I COULD TELL HIM THAT WE WOULD COOPERATE IN AND SUPPORT A SOLUTION THAT PROVIDED UNAMBIGUOUS FREEDOM OF ACTION WITH DUE EMPHASIS ON THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-INTERVENTION.

3. ON THE LATTER POINT, THE FOREIGN MINISTER AGREED WITH ME THAT IT WOULD BE UNDESIRABLE TO LEAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT FIDEL CASTRO HAS NOW BEEN ABSOLVED OF HIS SINS, INCLUDING THOSE HE COMMITTED IN THIS COUNTRY AMONG OTHERS. ESCOVAR THOUGHT A STRONG EMPHASIS ON NON-INTERVENTION APPROPRIATE TO A RESOLUTION LIFTING THE SANCTIONS AND SAID HE WOULD CONSULT THE PRESIDENT IN

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THAT REGARD. (I DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT THE GOV WILL BE PREPARED

TO GO BEYOND A GENERAL STATEMENT ON THE SANCTITY OF THE PRINCIPLE.)

4. THE FOREIGN MINISTER UNDERSTOOD THAT WE COULD NOT GO FORWARD TO THE SANCTIONS QUESTION WITHOUT FIRST SUCCESSFULLY DISPOSING OF THE RIO TREATY REFORMS. HE MOST EMPHATICALLY AGREED THAT THEREAFTER THE ORGAN OF CONSULTATION SHOULD NOT BE CONVOKED UNLESS A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THE SANCTIONS QUESTION IS ASSURED. I EXPLAINED TO HIM THE ONE AND TWO-STEP ALTERNATIVES AND OUR BELIEF THAT THE FORMER IS PREFERABLE. HE HAD NO JUDGMENT ON THE POINT AND, DESPITE MY BEST EFFORTS, PROBABLY STILL DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THE TWO-STEP FORMULA. (I DID NOT GO INTO LIEVANO'S PROPOSAL FOR A SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTE SINCE IT IS NOT CLEAR TO ME WHAT PRECISELY LIEVANO HAS IN MIND.). ESCOVAR WAS QUITE CLEAR IN THE CONVICTION THAT THE WORST POSSIBLE RESULT WOULD BE FAILURE IN THE ORGAN OF CONSULTATION AND THOUGHT IT BETTER NOT TO CONVOKE THAT BODY IF SUCH A RISK EXISTS.

5. ESCOVAR SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT LIEVANO AND RABASA MIGHT DROP IN AT THE END OF THE CONFERENCE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FINAL DELIBERATIONS ON THE CUBA QUESTION. HE SAID HE WOULD BE IN MEXICO AT THE TIME AND VAILABLE TO GO ALSO IF THAT APPEARED DESIRABLE. HE THANKED ME FOR THE RUNDOWN AND SAID HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH MACHIN.

6. COMMENT: I HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT ESCOVAR, AT LEAST, IS MORE INTERESTED IN THE CHANGE OF VOTING REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE RIO TREATY THAN HE IS IN THE SANCTIONS QUESTION PER SE. HE HAS ASKED ME ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS TO REASSURE HIM THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL IN FACT VOTE FOR THAT CHANGE. THE VENEZUELANS SEEM TO THINK THAT THE SHIFT FROM TWO-THIRDS TO A MAJORITY WILL PROVIDE SUFFICIENT EX-POST-FACTO JUSTIFICATION FOR THEIR RECOGNITION OF CUBA. THE LIFTING OF THE SANCTIONS THEMSELVES THEN BECOMES FOR THEM NOT MUCH MORE THAN A FORMALITY.

7. I DO THINK, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WILL BE COOPERATIVE AND HOPE WE WILL STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH MACHIN AS MATTERS PROGRESS.  
SHLAUDEMAM

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, MEETINGS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 11 JUL 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS,5FEB2009  
**Errors:** n/a  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
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**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** 75 STATE 158657  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 08 SEP 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <08 SEP 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 20010601  
**Subject:** SAN JOSE CONFERENCE  
**TAGS:** PFOR, OCON, VE, CU, US, OAS, (SHLAUDEMAN, HARRY W), (ESCOVAR SALOM, RAMON)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006